THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Considering the complexity of the refinery project and the multifold increase in the investment as well as quantum of work together with current delivery schedules of major equipment and materials, Mechanical Completion of the Paradip refinery and petrochemicals project is expected to be by April, 2011.

(c) and (d) In addition to constant monitoring and follow-up by concerned senior officers, the progress of the Paradip Refinery and Petrochemicals project is being monitored on a monthly basis at the levels of Executives Director/Director (Refineries), Corporate Management Committee/Board of Indian Oil Corporation Limited.

Policy on new CNG stations

2225. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS BAL* APTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some State Government are opening CNG filling stations without seeking approval from the Central Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether State Governments have the powers to set up CNG filling stations;

(d) if not, whether the Central Government are contemplating formulation of any gas distribution policy;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Central Government has sought suggestions from the State Government in this regard; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Some State Governments, namely, Gujarat, Haryana, U.P. and Rajasthan have authorized setting up of City Gas Distribution projects or have initiated

action for the same. Government of Gujarat has granted licences for laying CNG network in the cities of Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar. Government of Uttar Pradesh, through UPSIDC, has issued No Objection Certificates for implementation of city gas distribution projects in Lucknow, NOIDA, Moradabad and Ghaziabad. Similarly, Government of Haryana has granted No Objection Certificate for city gas distribution projects in Faridabad and Gurgaon. Government of Rajasthan has invited Expression of Interest for gas distribution in the State.

(c) The Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order given in advisory jurisdiction on 25th March, 2004 in the Special Reference No. 1/2001 has opined that natural gas, including Liquefied Natural Gas, is a Union subject covered under Entry 53 of the Union List. Accordingly, the Union has exclusive legislative competence to enact laws on natural gas. The States have no legislative competence to make laws on the subject of natural gas.

Under Article 73 of the constitution, the executive power of the Union extends to these matters, with respect to which Parliament has the power to make laws. In the light of the same, State Governments have no power to authorize setting up of CNG filling stations.

Further, the Government has notified, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006, on April 3, 2006 which envisages this Board's authorization to entities to lay, build, operate or expand city or local natural gas distribution network. Accordingly, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board has to issue authorizations for city gas distribution projects.

(d) to (g) Yes, Sir. The Government is in the process of finalizing the policy for development of Natural gas Pipelines and City or Local Natural Gas Distribution Networks. The policy is being finalized in consultation with all stakeholders. The views and comments of various stakeholders were invited on the draft pipeline policy. Meetings with the stakeholders have been held in the months of June, July and October, 2006.

Exploration venture with Russia

2226. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has proposed an exploration venture